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A BODY OF WATER

BY LEE BLESSING

★ Revised Edition



★
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PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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SPECIAL NOTE

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The World Premiere of A BODY OF WATER
was produced by the Guthrie Theater,
Joe Dowling, Artistic Director.

The world premiere of A BODY OF WATER was produced by the Guthrie Theater (Joe Dowling, Artistic Director) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, opening on June 15, 2005. It was directed by Ethan McSweeney; the set design was by Michael Vaughn Sims; the costume design was by Rich Hamson; the lighting design was by Matthew Reinert; the original music was by Michael Roth; and the stage manager was Michaela K. McCoy. The cast was as follows:

AVIS Michael Learned
MOSS Edward Herrmann
WREN Michelle O'Neill

The West Coast premiere of A BODY OF WATER was produced by the Old Globe (Jack O'Brien, Artistic Director; Louis G. Spisto, Executive Director) in San Diego, California, opening on February 11, 2006. It was directed by Ethan McSweeney; the set design was by Michael Vaughn Sims; the costume design was by Charlotte Devaux; the lighting design was by York Kennedy; the original music was by Michael Roth; and the stage manager was Diana Moser. The cast was as follows:

AVIS Sandy Duncan
MOSS Ned Schmidtke
WREN Samantha Soule

CHARACTERS

AVIS — 45-55

MOSS — 45-55

WREN — 20s

PLACE

A summer house.

TIME

Recently.

"Of what use are the rivers? Of what use is the ocean?"

—*Salina, Kansas, 1895,*
from an eighth-grade final exam

A BODY OF WATER

Scene 1

A summer morning. A house situated high on a hill. The room is ringed by wide picture windows. Forested hills surround the house. Distant patches of a body of water may be visible. Moss sits in a silk robe, staring outside. He sips from a cup of coffee. A moment passes. Avis enters, also dressed in a robe. It's expensive like his, but in a different style and material. She stands behind him, staring out.

AVIS. What is that?

MOSS. What?

AVIS. The water down there. It seems to go all around. You can see it in three different directions. Four, actually.

MOSS. You think it's all the same? The same body of water, I mean?

AVIS. I don't know. It could be. Isn't it?

MOSS. I don't know.

AVIS. The hills get in the way. The trees. I was trying to see if it has a current, but it's too far away.

MOSS. A current?

AVIS. To see if it's a river.

MOSS. As opposed to — ?

AVIS. I don't know, an inlet? A sort of sinuous lake?

MOSS. Sinuous?

AVIS. They have them. I think I remember growing up near a lake like that.

MOSS. Really? Where?

AVIS. I wouldn't know. Just have a feeling.

MOSS. *(Rising, staring out.)* Can't even see any roads. Too many trees.

AVIS. There have to be roads. We must have gotten up here somehow.

MOSS. I don't know. We could've been dropped off by a helicopter.
 AVIS. A helicopter?
 MOSS. Why not? We could have. It happens all the time, in commercials.
 AVIS. Do you see a helipad nearby?
 MOSS. There wouldn't have to be a —
 AVIS. A landing area, of any sort? There's no room; it drops off in every direction.
 MOSS. Anyway, it's a great view. No matter how we got here. Bright, blue sky. Endless forest. You can see it all.
 AVIS. It's a beautiful room.
 MOSS. Absolutely.
 AVIS. I wonder whose it is?
 MOSS. (*After a beat.*) Maybe it's ours. Or one of ours. I mean, it could belong to one of us.
 AVIS. Not impossible, I suppose.
 MOSS. This is an expensive robe I'm wearing.
 AVIS. You found it in the closet.
 MOSS. It could be mine. Fits. Yours fits. This could be us. All of this — ours, I mean. Together. Why not?
 AVIS. (*Unconvinced.*) I suppose.
 MOSS. Or one of us could be the other's guest.
 AVIS. Which one?
 MOSS. It would be easier to figure out who's the host. Any pictures around?
 AVIS. I don't see any.
 MOSS. Nothing on the refrigerator door?
 AVIS. No.
 MOSS. (*After a beat.*) They might've dropped us off with a rope.
 AVIS. What?
 MOSS. One of those ropes they dangle from helicopters, in tight spots.
 AVIS. You really think we were dropped off from a helicopter?
 MOSS. We can't completely rule it out. With a rope they could —
 AVIS. Rescue workers use those. Special ... forces. Normal people don't dangle on ropes hanging from helicopters.
 MOSS. Of course they do. They haul them up.
 AVIS. (*Increasingly exercised.*) In stretchers. Tied to stretchers. That's how normal people — (*Calming herself.*) I can't believe we're talking about this.
 MOSS. What do you think we usually talk about?

AVIS. How do you know we've ever talked at all?
 MOSS. I don't care what you say. Being dropped off with a rope seems entirely plausible to me.
 AVIS. We have a difference of opinion.
 MOSS. I guess we do. You think that's common for us?
 AVIS. For us?
 MOSS. As a couple, I mean. Disagreements.
 AVIS. We don't know that we are a couple.
 MOSS. (*Moving towards a door, stopping.*) Is there any food in the kitchen?
 AVIS. Cereal. Some milk. Orange juice. A loaf of very heavy, very dark bread. Looks like something Roman legions used to ... feed their enemies.
 MOSS. You're funny.
 AVIS. What?
 MOSS. That was a sort of ... witticism. Wasn't it?
 AVIS. And there are some eggs. (*After a beat.*) When I woke up your hand was on my breast.
 MOSS. You didn't tell me that.
 AVIS. It was personal. Besides, you were snoring away ...
 MOSS. What did you do?
 AVIS. Slipped out of bed. After I'd removed your hand. Gingerly.
 MOSS. Gingerly?
 AVIS. I didn't know ... I mean, I don't know — do I?
 MOSS. (*After a beat.*) Can you cook?
 AVIS. Can't everyone?
 MOSS. I'm not sure I can. For some reason, I've been thinking about those eggs.
 AVIS. It's morning. You're hungry.
 MOSS. No — I just have this picture in my mind of eggs in boiling water, becoming ... They get harder, right? And some people like them that way. But my mother didn't. My mother — ! I'm having a very vivid memory right now —
 AVIS. Yes?
 MOSS. My mother, in a ... um, what do they call them? Not rest homes anymore. Assisted...?
 AVIS. Care.
 MOSS. Assisted *care*. Assisting her, of course — caring for her ...
 AVIS. You have a memory of this?
 MOSS. Vivid. I remember her saying — because she said everything over and over at the time, her memory was completely gone,

advanced age ...
 AVIS. What was her name?
 MOSS. No idea. But she hated hard-boiled eggs and refused to eat with the others on the mornings they served them. And so ...
(Struggling for the memory.) Yes! She would stay in her own ... area, or apartment I guess it was, and *soft-boil* her own eggs. Herself. Of course, I never saw her do this. *(With a shrug.)* That's it; that's the whole thing.
 AVIS. What a startling memory.
 MOSS. Not all that helpful, I suppose. Maybe it's not even true.
 AVIS. Could that be what you do? Make up stories, or ... write?
 MOSS. Maybe. That egg story has a familiar feel to it, though. I think it could be true. Why not?
 AVIS. How would you tell this story? Our story. Today.
 MOSS. I don't know, um ... I woke alone in there, in bed — though the bed smelled like someone else. There was another pillow, deformed by someone's head — someone else's, not mine. My body had a memory of something warm, shapely — well, you. You say my hand was on your breast —
 AVIS. It was.
 MOSS. So ... that's the story, I guess. Overall, it felt ... sweet. How did my hand feel? On your breast, I mean?
 AVIS. I don't know. I was just waking up. It was ... comfortable. Comprehensive.
 MOSS. Comprehensive?
 AVIS. Covering, I mean. All of my — This feels embarrassing.
 MOSS. Not if we're man and wife —
 AVIS. Are we?
 MOSS. *(After a beat.)* Anyway, I heard someone else — you I mean, in the kitchen.
 AVIS. Making coffee —
 MOSS. Familiar smell, familiar sounds. I nearly called out.
 AVIS. What were you going to say? A name?
 MOSS. Might have been a name. *(After a beat.)* I didn't call, though. I got up. I was naked.
 AVIS. We both were.
 MOSS. And I saw a robe. In the closet.
 AVIS. Did it look familiar?
 MOSS. The robe?
 AVIS. Anything.
 MOSS. It looked ... possible.

AVIS. *(After a beat.)* Then what?
 MOSS. I ... went to the bathroom —
 AVIS. Yes, I heard. After that?
 MOSS. I came in the kitchen. I saw you.
 AVIS. And what did you think?
 MOSS. What a lovely woman.
 AVIS. Not, it's my wife? My mistress? My ... co-worker?
 MOSS. Sorry. What did you think when I walked in?
 AVIS. I don't know —
 MOSS. Did you notice anything?
 AVIS. Your ears were uneven.
 MOSS. My ears? Great. Wonderful. *Now* we're getting somewhere. *(He sighs irritably and turns to stare out the window.)*
 AVIS. They're not very uneven —
 MOSS. *(Suddenly spotting something.)* Oh, look! There is a driveway!
 AVIS. Where?
 MOSS. Down the hill there, through those branches.
 AVIS. *(Looking.)* No car, though.
 MOSS. Why wouldn't we have a car?
 AVIS. Maybe there was an accident.
 MOSS. But we're here, in bed. Sleeping peacefully, my hand on your —
 AVIS. Will you let that go? I'm sorry I told you.
 MOSS. Just can't figure out why we don't have a ... *(A sudden thought.)* Did we look for a ring?
 AVIS. A ring?
 MOSS. Wedding ring. See if we're married.
 AVIS. We're not wearing rings.
 MOSS. I could be the kind of man who doesn't wear rings.
 AVIS. But where's mine?
 MOSS. Maybe you take it off when you sleep. Maybe it's some huge rock or something I gave you, and you take it off at night. Maybe it's on the nightstand or in a drawer.
 AVIS. Some huge rock?
 MOSS. Why not?
 AVIS. From when we were rich, you mean?
 MOSS. Aren't we now?
 AVIS. We can't afford a car, apparently.
 MOSS. It's simple enough. We go in the bedroom and look. *(As she stares at him.)* Or ... I'll wait here. What are you waiting for?
 AVIS. What would it really prove?

MOSS. That you have a ring.
 AVIS. That someone has a ring. That there's a ring in the house.
 MOSS. That's a pretty strong indicator —
 AVIS. (*Angrily.*) I'm not looking for indicators, I'm looking for —!
 (*Catching herself.*) I'm sorry.
 MOSS. No problem.
 AVIS. (*Sitting.*) I'll look later. If there is a ring, it's not going anywhere.
 MOSS. Let me see your hand.
 AVIS. Why?
 MOSS. Please? Just want to see if there's a, you know, telltale mark of a ring ...
 AVIS. Oh.
 MOSS. (*Looking closely at her ring finger.*) You're very pale; your fingers are slim ... It could go either way.
 AVIS. At least you tried.
 MOSS. Seemed like a good idea. (*He stares at the bedroom door, sits. They're both quiet.*)
 AVIS. I have a memory!
 MOSS. You do?
 AVIS. Yes. Suddenly. And it's very vivid. Very ... I'm in college.
 MOSS. Where?
 AVIS. I have no idea. But it's in a ... cafeteria or dining hall or something, and I'm talking with a boy. He's my boy, he's ... he's the boy in my life.
 MOSS. A child?
 AVIS. No, no, no, no, no. We date, I mean.
 MOSS. He's not me, though.
 AVIS. I don't think so. We were breaking up. We were having "the conversation." The big ... And anyway, he was getting sentimental and clingy, and I remember the question came up about our first weekend together — our first genuinely romantic, fully sexual time together. And he asked me if I knew what had been for him the very sexiest moment of that weekend. So I guessed the most amazingly hot moment that I could remember — actually, it was a very intense, made-my-legs-tremble sort of memory. And it was wrong. That wasn't the moment he'd been thinking of at all. And then he told me his moment. And the funny thing was, I couldn't remember his. Neither of us had the slightest recollection of the other one's moment — as though each of those moments had happened for only one of us. As though the other person ... was not even there,

or never had been. Or worse, of course, had been — and we were living two entirely separate lives, even as we made love. (*A silence.*)
 MOSS. Maybe we're just acquaintances. Maybe we don't even know each other all that well. We could be house guests of someone who's ... gone away for something. And they'll be back.
 AVIS. And while they were gone — apparently all night — we slept together?
 MOSS. Maybe we have loose morals. (*After a beat.*) This is just a glitch. We'll be back on track any minute. The old chain'll engage and — (*Suddenly.*) Maybe I sell real estate. Maybe I sell houses like this. You could be a prospective buyer.
 AVIS. With whom you went to bed?
 MOSS. It happens.
 AVIS. Wouldn't one of us have a car? (*Her tone changing.*) This is the worst feeling in the world.
 MOSS. (*After a beat.*) OK, here's a thought. I'm afraid you'll get the wrong idea.
 AVIS. No, no — that's all right. What is it?
 MOSS. We could look ... No, it's stupid.
 AVIS. What is it?
 MOSS. I don't know why I even thought of it.
 AVIS. Will you just tell me?
 MOSS. We could look at each other's bodies.
 AVIS. *What?*
 MOSS. Not sexually. But ... we've got robes on. We could, you know, whip 'em open, quick flash, maybe something'll jog our memory.
 AVIS. I can't believe you suggested that.
 MOSS. It's not so crazy. There could be birthmarks, scars, a mole pattern —
 AVIS. A mole pattern?
 MOSS. And even if there isn't, you sleep with someone for decades maybe — we don't know — their body becomes a very familiar sight. It becomes ... something you know.
 AVIS. So you're suggesting that even though you can stare into my face for minutes on end and not recognize me, a momentary glimpse of my private parts —
 MOSS. I knew you'd take it wrong.
 AVIS. What "right" way is there to take it?
 MOSS. Everyone's body is different. We have no idea — The size of something, the shape, the color, the —

AVIS. Relative tumescence?
 MOSS. Why are you making it dirty? I knew you'd react like this.
 AVIS. How? How did you know?
 MOSS. I don't know. I just did. If we're married you'd only be showing yourself to your husband.
 AVIS. If There's just as much chance I don't know you. I'm not in the habit of disrobing before strangers. I think.
 MOSS. Forget I mentioned it. Go back to Plan A. Check the bedroom for a ring. *(She looks at the bedroom, then at him. Suddenly she stands before him.)* What? *(Avis opens her robe to him. She's naked beneath. The audience need not see this, and it's probably better so. The audience should however see Moss's face. He stares, wide-eyed.)*
 AVIS. Anything look familiar?
 MOSS. I ...
 AVIS. Yes?
 MOSS. No tattoos. *(With a sigh, she closes the robe again.)*
 AVIS. No. No tattoos. I noticed that in the bathroom. *(Moving to the window, looking out.)* So. No blinding flashes of ... recognition?
 MOSS. You're beautiful.
 AVIS. I'll take that as a no. *(She goes into the kitchen. Sounds of rummaging in the silverware drawer.)*
 MOSS. Where are you going? What are you — ?
 AVIS. *(Returning with a pair of tongs.)* OK, now you.
 MOSS. What's that?
 AVIS. You don't expect me to actually touch it? Up, up. *(He rises as she sits. She maneuvers him into the best light.)*
 MOSS. I really want to object to this —
 AVIS. Why? For all you know, I'm a doctor.
 MOSS. Jesus.
 AVIS. Open, open — *(He takes a deep breath and opens his robe. Again, we shouldn't see what Avis sees, but we should see Avis.)*
 MOSS. Careful —
 AVIS. I'm not going to hurt it. *(She applies the tongs and inspects, apparently turning his member to various angles.)*
 MOSS. Well?
 AVIS. Very interesting.
 MOSS. What?
 AVIS. Like a penis, only smaller.
 MOSS. Can we get serious?
 AVIS. Sorry.
 MOSS. Any distinguishing characteristics?

AVIS. Not really.
 MOSS. What about the lean? I think I dress left — *(Sound of a car door slamming outside. Moss whips his robe shut.)* Jesus Christ — !
 AVIS. Who's that — ?
 MOSS. How should I know — ?!
 AVIS. *(Of the tongs.)* What do I — ?!
 MOSS. Kitchen! Kitchen! *(Avis rushes into the kitchen with the tongs. Sound of silver splashing on the kitchen floor.)*
 AVIS. *(Off.)* Damn — !!! See who it is!
 MOSS. I don't even know who we are — !
 AVIS. *(Off.)* Look out the window!
 MOSS. I can't! I'm in my robe!
 AVIS. *(Off.)* My God, we're in our robes!
 MOSS. We're in somebody's robes!
 AVIS. *(Hurrying back in.)* What should we do?!
 MOSS. Get dressed?!
 AVIS. Were there any clothes?
 MOSS. I don't know —
 AVIS. Didn't you look?!
 MOSS. Didn't you?! *(Wren, in running pants and a sweatshirt, appears at the door. Moss sees her first.)* Jesus — !!!
 AVIS. Oh — !
 MOSS. What in hell are you — ?! Who do you think — ?!
 AVIS. We mean — We're sorry we're in our robes.
 MOSS. What makes you think you can walk right into — !?
 AVIS. Unless they're your robes. In which case, we're —
 MOSS. I'm calling the police —
 WREN. What in hell's going on? *(Avis and Moss freeze, look at each other.)* What is going on?
 AVIS. We have no idea. *(Lights fade quickly to black.)*

Scene 2

Several minutes later. Wren sits across from Moss, who's still in his robe. Avis is gone. There's a long pause before Wren speaks.

WREN. I brought bagels.
MOSS. Bagels. That sounds nice.
WREN. Just have to slice 'em up. I'll wait 'til she gets back.
MOSS. OK.
WREN. Beautiful day today, isn't it?
MOSS. Perfect.
WREN. You don't know my name, do you?
MOSS. What makes you think that?
WREN. That would be pretty funny, wouldn't it? If you didn't know my name?
MOSS. Yes.
WREN. Yes, it would be funny? Or yes, you don't know my name?
(After a beat.) My name is Wren. Like the little bird.
MOSS. *(Nodding, covering.)* Um-hm.
WREN. Little brown bird. Lots of people think they see wrens all the time, but they don't. They see a sparrow and think it's a wren. English sparrows. Fucking imports. The most common birds in America. They scare the crap out of the wrens. If you want to see wrens you need to build a wren house about ten feet up. Wrens are perching birds; they like to stay above you. Sparrows, on the other hand, crawl around in the dirt like tiny, shit-colored pigeons. Did you two sleep all right?
MOSS. Yes?
WREN. Thought you did. I mean, I didn't hear anything.
MOSS. Did you sleep ... here?
WREN. *(Laughing at the question.)* What do you think? So you're getting along, the two of you?
MOSS. We seem to be. Yes, I'd say we were.
WREN. Good. 'Cause I don't want to worry about you. *(Avis enters, dressed stylishly but quite casually.)*
AVIS. Worry about what?
MOSS. Oh — nothing. You look, um ... very nice.

AVIS. Thanks. There's so much to choose from. In the dresser.
MOSS. Oh ... *(He exits into the bedroom.)*
WREN. You look lovely in that.
AVIS. Thank you.
WREN. Just right for summer. Love the shoes, too.
AVIS. Perfect fit.
WREN. Why wouldn't they be?
AVIS. Oh, sometimes — you know — you buy things a little tight, say, just for style.
WREN. Sure. *(Staring at Avis, who finally has to look away.)* It's nice to see the two of you finally relaxing. I have bagels in the kitchen.
AVIS. That sounds lovely.
WREN. Soon as we're all here, OK? All three of us, I mean.
AVIS. Great.
WREN. Gorgeous day.
AVIS. *(Going to the window.)* Oh — yes. Couldn't be better.
WREN. You'll say anything, won't you?
AVIS. Pardon?
WREN. Do you know what all that water is?
AVIS. What? Out there?
WREN. That would be it, yes.
AVIS. So beautiful. And all the same, right? All the water we can see, in the different, various directions.
WREN. You think?
AVIS. Don't you? I mean, isn't it? *(As Wren stares, silent.)* And ... And it's just amazing to think, I mean, that all of it ... *(Pointing outside.)* That that, for example — *(Pointing the opposite way.)* is the same ... as ... as that.
WREN. Is it?
AVIS. So in a way, I suppose, it's like a tree.
WREN. Pardon?
AVIS. The system, I mean. The whole enormous ... For example, what does a tiny little leaf at the top of a hundred-foot oak have to do with the, I don't know, the deepest part of ... the tap root, for example? How do they even know they're part of the same tree?
WREN. They feel it.
AVIS. Feel what?
WREN. Attached. There's something you want to ask me, isn't there?
AVIS. No.
WREN. It's all over your face. Why not just ask it?

AVIS. Really, I can't think of any —
 WREN. What. Am. I. Doing. Here? (*Avis is frozen. Moss returns. He's dressed in something comfortable, summery and expensive.*)
 MOSS. Back again.
 AVIS. Oh — ! Hi. You look great!
 MOSS. Don't know if great's the word —
 AVIS. Very good, then. You look completely ... very you.
 WREN. I'll get at those bagels. (*Wren goes into the kitchen.*)
 AVIS. Who *is* she?
 MOSS. I was hoping you'd know.
 AVIS. That's not very likely, is it? Fucking shoes.
 MOSS. What?
 AVIS. "Why shouldn't they fit?" She was toying with me!
 MOSS. You, too? What in hell does she want?
 AVIS. We should tie her up.
 MOSS. What?!

AVIS. We can overpower her. There's two of us —
 MOSS. I'm not going to "overpower" anybody —
 AVIS. We don't know who she is! She could be anyone. She could be —
 MOSS. Our daughter. For all we know. I mean, what does it seem like? She's bringing us breakfast, she slept here last night —
 AVIS. She told you that?
 MOSS. I think so. Yeah. She told me her name, too. It's Wren.
 AVIS. Wren? Like the bird?
 MOSS. Exactly. The bird. That she definitely told me.
 AVIS. I would never name anyone that.
 MOSS. How do you know?
 AVIS. Who names their daughter Wren?
 MOSS. You, apparently.
 AVIS. I would never have named my daughter —
 WREN. (*Off.*) Here I come!
 AVIS. Wren! Can I help you with that?
 WREN. (*Off.*) No problem!
 AVIS. If she was our daughter we'd *feel* something for her. Do you feel something for her?
 MOSS. I don't know — fear? (*Wren enters with a tray on which she has sliced bagels, cream cheese, jam, butter, etc. She sets it down, starts preparing a bagel.*)
 WREN. Here we go. I put some tea on. Herbal. Something tells me you've been going a little heavy on the caffeine —

MOSS. Thanks. This is very ... thoughtful of you.
 WREN. It's your money. (*Handing Moss a plain bagel with cream cheese.*) Here you go.
 MOSS. Is this what I like?
 WREN. Plain with plain. It's what you liked yesterday. (*To Avis.*) Cinnamon raisin? Butter and jam?
 AVIS. Hm? Oh, right! That's me. Isn't it?
 WREN. You can have whatever you want.
 AVIS. Oh ... I don't care. Whatever you —
 WREN. Not whatever; what do you *want*?
 AVIS. Cinnamon raisin's fine. That sounds like what ... what I suppose I should want. (*As Wren glares.*) Do want. What I actively do want. Yes. Thank you. (*Wren hands her the bagel, starts making one for herself. They stare at her.*)
 WREN. Aren't you going to eat? (*They keep staring. Wren shakes her head disgustedly, then takes a big bite of her bagel. Moss and Avis begin eating. The teakettle whistles. Avis starts to rise.*) No. I'll get it. (*Wren exits. Avis and Moss whisper.*)
 AVIS. I can't stand this! I'm going to tell her.
 MOSS. No! We don't know enough — !
 AVIS. She can see right through us. She must know we can't —
 MOSS. *Not necessarily.*
 WREN. (*Off.*) My ears are burning!
 AVIS. (*Calling out.*) Why should that be?
 WREN. (*Off.*) You tell me. (*Avis stares out a window. Moss sits thinking. Soft sounds of Wren getting tea ready in the other room.*) Sugar substitute OK?
 AVIS and MOSS. (*Calling out in unison.*) Fabulous! (*Surprised, they stare at each other. Wren enters with the tea tray. She sets it down, looks at them.*)
 WREN. We got awfully quiet suddenly.
 AVIS. We don't know who we are.
 MOSS. Don't — !
 AVIS. We woke up this morning with no idea ... who we are.
 MOSS. Damn — !
 WREN. What are you saying to me?
 AVIS. I think we just said it.
 MOSS. Don't drag me in.
 WREN. Do you know your names?
 MOSS. Yes.
 AVIS. (*Simultaneously with Moss.*) No.

WREN. Which is it?
 MOSS. We know your name. That's all we know.
 WREN. Hm. (*Regarding them, staring at each closely.*) Hm. Hm. (*Wren suddenly exits.*)
 AVIS. Where'd she go?
 MOSS. I don't know. You should never have told her.
 AVIS. I don't care. If you're lost in the woods, they say sit tight — send up a flare. I'm sending up a flare.
 MOSS. What if you burn down the woods? (*Wren reenters, carrying a wallet and a purse. She sets these down in front of them.*)
 WREN. These are yours. They should provide ample evidence of your personal identities. (*Moss and Avis stare dubiously at the new items.*)
 MOSS. Where'd you get those?
 WREN. In the bedroom, in the nightstand. On the floor, next to the bed. Are you saying you didn't notice them?
 AVIS. We own these things?
 WREN. What do you think? You wake up together in a room; there's a purse, there's a wallet —
 MOSS. And that's supposed to prove something?
 WREN. If you want to know who you are, simply look. (*They stare at the items without touching them.*) OK, this is getting on my nerves. Screw the bagel, I'm going for a run. Straighten this out by the time I get back. It's not like we've got all day.
 AVIS. We don't?
 MOSS. What do you mean? (*Wren leaves.*)
 AVIS. Why don't we have all day?
 MOSS. I don't know. Maybe we have to be somewhere.
 AVIS. Where?!

MOSS. I don't know! I'm surmising. That's all I can do right now. Surmise.
 AVIS. And who do you surmise she is?
 MOSS. Our daughter?
 AVIS. Oh, right — our daughter, who hears that we've lost our marbles — at the same, precise moment, no less — and decides to go out for a run?
 MOSS. We don't know it was the same moment.
 AVIS. What do you mean?
 MOSS. Maybe one of us has been ... gone for a long time. Maybe the other one just ... I don't know, went last night.
 AVIS. That sounds likely.

MOSS. It's at least as likely as —
 AVIS. The point is, she'd be surprised — in either case. Unless we've both been this way for a long time. (*After a beat.*) Do you think we wake up every day like this?
 MOSS. No.
 AVIS. How do you know?
 MOSS. 'Cause she's irritated. She's used to more from us, it's obvious. Plus there's something we're supposed to do later.
 AVIS. What?
 MOSS. I don't know. It seemed important, though. To her.
 AVIS. Do you think she takes care of us or something? You think it's good days, bad days — that sort of thing?
 MOSS. Could be.
 AVIS. How terrible for her.
 MOSS. Yes, I suppose that would be terrible. *If* we're married, and if she's our daughter, and if we've been like this a long time. Then again —
 AVIS. What?
 MOSS. She could be CIA.
 AVIS. Oh, Christ.
 MOSS. No, seriously. We could be scientists, or ... or material witnesses, international criminals, terrorists —
 AVIS. Terrorists?
 MOSS. The CIA could have captured us, they could have given us something that makes us —
 AVIS. Lose our memory?
 MOSS. Or ... or they could be *reconstructing* our memories. Maybe we saw something that was sensitive. And to avoid having to kill us, they're doing something more merciful —
 AVIS. There is *nothing* merciful about this! *Nothing*.
 MOSS. (*After a beat, as she stares outside.*) Guess it's not really all that likely.
 AVIS. Have you ever heard of Occam's Razor?
 MOSS. I think so ...
 AVIS. You should get it, and use it to cut your throat.
 MOSS. (*After a beat, quietly.*) That's no way to talk to a perfect stranger. (*Avis starts laughing softly. Moss starts to smile and laughs a little himself. He stops as Avis's laughter turns first to soft crying and then to a deep, terrified series of sobs. He moves to her and holds her.*) Hey ... don't. It's going to be OK. Stop it ...
 AVIS. (*Panicky.*) How can I stop? It's not stopping ... How can

I — ?

MOSS. We're going to be fine. We'll figure this out.

AVIS. *How?! All you remember is your mother in a nursing home someplace. All I remember is something I can't remember...!*

MOSS. (*Moving her gently towards a chair.*) Come on. Sit down, we'll be fine. (*Cautiously, once she's seated.*) You'll be OK?

AVIS. Yes ... yes, I'm better. Thanks. (*He sits across from her. Slowly they look at the purse and wallet. They hesitate.*)

MOSS. I don't want to touch those things.

AVIS. Neither do I.

MOSS. Why?

AVIS. I don't know. Picture ID's in there, I suppose. Our pictures.

MOSS. They can always fake that.

AVIS. The CIA, you mean?

MOSS. Whoever.

AVIS. It might be worse if they're real.

MOSS. Why?

AVIS. Our pictures, and names we don't ... Just names.

MOSS. It'll probably jog our memory.

AVIS. I think our memory already jogged. It jogged away, and it's not coming back. (*Moss hands her the purse and picks up the wallet. They examine the items. Each finds a picture ID. They stare at them.*)

MOSS. My name is Moss. My *first* name. Is that even possible?

AVIS. Moss what?

MOSS. Sibley. Sibley? What kind of parents would do that? Moss Sibley — all those esses. (*After a beat.*) Who are you?

AVIS. Avis.

MOSS. *Avis?*

AVIS. What's wrong with that?

MOSS. Moss and Avis? So. Last name?

AVIS. Mecklenberg. I'm Avis Mecklenberg. So we're not —

MOSS. Hold on. Maybe you didn't take my name.

AVIS. I kept Mecklenberg?

MOSS. What's the address?

MOSS and AVIS. (*Together.*) Three-twenty-seven Hillcrest ... (*They stare at each other.*)

MOSS. Look in your purse — anything say "Mrs."?

AVIS. Yes!

MOSS. There you go — we're married.

AVIS. To each other?

MOSS. We live in the same house.

AVIS. Or building.

MOSS. No apartment number.

AVIS. It could be a duplex.

MOSS. Why don't you want to be married? What is so horrible about me?

AVIS. Nothing. It's just ... I want to stop guessing.

MOSS. (*As she starts to tear up.*) Oh, don't cry again. Please ...

AVIS. I'm sorry ...

MOSS. As far as I'm concerned I'm married to the lovely and emotional Avis Mecklenberg, and that's all there is to it. I'm a lucky man.

AVIS. That's very nice of you. Thanks. (*A sudden discovery.*) Oh — Wren!

MOSS. What?

AVIS. Wren — a bird. My name is Avis — Latin for bird. That proves it, doesn't it? Kind of like a female junior, in a subtle way.

MOSS. So she's our daughter?

AVIS. It would appear.

MOSS. And we're all one big, happy family? Surrounded by ...

AVIS. A big body of water, yes. This is our summer place. I bet the cupboards are full of ... photos and things. Hundreds of evidences of, of, of ... us.

MOSS. Our history.

AVIS. Exactly. Isn't this wonderful? We can dive right in.

MOSS. (*As they sit unmoving.*) When do you want to start?

AVIS. We should have the tea first, before it gets cold.

MOSS. OK.

AVIS. Our daughter *did* make it for us. The least we can do is — (*She's poised to pour when Wren calls from outside.*)

WREN. (*Off.*) I'm back! (*They jump. Avis puts down the teapot without pouring. Wren walks in, a little out of breath.*) So. Do we know who we are?

MOSS. Moss.

AVIS. Avis.

MOSS. Sibley.

AVIS. Mecklenberg.

WREN. Mecklenberg?

AVIS. That's what's on —

WREN. That's only your professional name. You never use it with friends and family.

AVIS. I don't? No, of course not. So — Avis Sibley?

WREN. Works for me. Glad we're all on the same page again —

MOSS. With Wren Sibley.
 WREN. What?
 MOSS. You. Wren Sibley.
 WREN. (*With a somewhat troubling laugh.*) Not bloody likely.
 MOSS. You're married?
 WREN. You know folks, I don't have time for this. Tell you what — let's just get started, OK?
 AVIS. (*As Wren exits.*) Started doing what?
 WREN. (*Off.*) Oh, this is going to be a long, long day. (*Wren returns with a pen, a legal pad and a folder. She sits and stares them.*) You really don't know what we're doing? (*As they stare at her blankly.*) You're going to make me go through the whole damn thing again?
 MOSS. You're not our daughter?
 WREN. *Do I look like your daughter!?* (*Controlling herself.*) Sorry. Sorry. Let's take care of the basics first, OK?
 MOSS. No. We don't have to take care of anything. You come in here, tell us things, show us things — how do we know any of this is true? You say we're married; how do we know? (*As Wren exits to the bedroom.*) Why do you keep going out of the room!?
 WREN. (*Quickly returning with a rather large diamond ring.*) Will this do?
 AVIS. Is that — ?
 WREN. Your wedding ring. The stone's a little big, so you don't sleep with it on. It was on the night table. You didn't see it?
 AVIS. (*To Moss.*) You were right.
 WREN. Put it on her.
 MOSS. What?
 WREN. Put it on her. I want to get started. (*As he slips it on Avis's finger.*) OK, all married again. Time for the facts of life. Moss, what do you do for a living?
 MOSS. How should I know?
 WREN. You're a judge. State court of appeals.
 MOSS. Oh. Really? So is this ... are we...? Is this a vacation?
 WREN. Not exactly. You've taken a personal leave of absence.
 MOSS. For how long?
 WREN. Avis? Any thoughts about what it is you might do?
 AVIS. Sorry.
 WREN. You run a center for the healing of wounds.
 AVIS. I what?
 WREN. It's called the Wound Healing Institute, logically enough.

You run it. Not at the moment, actually. Like Moss, you're on hiatus.
 AVIS. Why?
 WREN. (*Pulling a photo from her folder.*) Does either of you know this person? (*They stare, unrecognizing. Wren takes note of their reactions.*)
 MOSS. It's a young girl.
 WREN. Beautiful, young girl. Come on, people. Give it a shot.
 AVIS. Is that our daughter?
 WREN. Score one for the wound healer! Yes, this is your daughter. Age?
 MOSS. Um ... I don't know. She looks, what — ?
 AVIS. Thirteen?
 WREN. Eleven. Late-ish baby. Only child. You had trouble getting pregnant.
 AVIS. Oh ...
 WREN. Apple of your eye.
 MOSS. Does she look like us?
 AVIS. A combination, maybe. Your chin.
 MOSS. Your nose, sort of.
 AVIS. Definitely your ears.
 MOSS. Thanks a lot.
 WREN. She was murdered five months ago. (*As Avis gasps, nearly dropping the picture.*) Two months ago her body was discovered — I can't believe I'm going over all this again — in a lake. That lake, out there. Can I have my picture back?
 MOSS. How was she...? Who...?
 WREN. (*Taking the picture from him.*) Blunt-force trauma to the skull. Got her head bashed in. We know that much, anyway. Oh — want to guess her name?
 AVIS. My God ... my God, my God —
 WREN. Do you remember her?
 AVIS. No, but ... I'm sorry, I feel sick.
 WREN. Why? Why do you feel sick? If I told you some little girl in India got murdered, would you — ?
 AVIS. You said she was ours —
 WREN. But you don't remember her. What's her name?
 AVIS. I ... I —
 WREN. Do you remember giving birth?
 AVIS. No.
 WREN. But when I show you this picture and tell you this girl is dead, it sickens you?

MOSS. *Leave her alone!!! (Moss stands over Wren threateningly. She makes a note.)*

WREN. Mm-hmm. That's OK. You can sit down again. *(As he does so, hesitantly.)* Your daughter's name by the way is — or was, I should say —

MOSS. Sparrow?

WREN. Good memory! No, not Sparrow. Robin. Her name was Robin. Any lightbulbs yet? No? OK, how about —

MOSS. How about you just lay it out for us? No more bullshit-ing around. No more questions. What in hell is going on?

WREN. If I tell you, it's just another wasted day.

MOSS. We'll take that chance.

WREN. Do you agree?

AVIS. Yes. Just tell us. Tell us about ... what's her name? Robin?

WREN. *(Rising, staring out the window.)* One bright, sunny, frozen day, you made a 911 call to your local authorities. Robin was missing from her home — your home. Not that far from here. This is your summer place, by the way. You claimed initially that she hadn't come home the night before. You thought she was at a sleep-over, but when she didn't come home that morning, you called, and ... well, she was just gone. Police came, took a few pictures, poked all around. Because you're a judge, they bent the rules and put out an immediate missing person's, Amber Alert — the whole package. After all, you seemed so *sure* she was missing and not just with friends, or a boy or whatever. And you were right. When the ice came off the lake three months later, there she was: a few shreds of her clothes, a bracelet, ankle chain — though not much ankle.

AVIS. Jesus — !

WREN. But there's no disguising a crushed skull. So BAP! Murder investigation. And the funny thing was, there were no suspects. Except you.

AVIS. But she wasn't with us.

WREN. She wasn't?

AVIS. I mean, you said.

WREN. I did, didn't I? See why it's so bad for me to tell you things?

AVIS. The sleep-over.

WREN. Funny thing about the sleep-over. It didn't happen. Her little friend got sick. So Robin did in fact flutter home that night at about — oh, eleven P.M. Dropped off by her friend's mom. She

watched her go in. So you had to change your story. "OK," you said, "We must have been asleep when she came home. We got confused." Awkward.

MOSS. Skip the commentary.

WREN. Police had you in. You went voluntarily. Prominent jurist, woman of accomplishment — it was all very delicate, believe me. You told what you knew, the second version: She must have sneaked out.

AVIS. If that's what we said —

WREN. Problem was, where would she go? Exclusive neighborhood, cold night. Hell of a long walk anywhere. She was eleven. Didn't take a very heavy coat. She didn't know anyone with a car. Except you. Speaking of cars, your neighbor — the insomniac? — claims to have heard one leave your place that night at, golly — two A.M. So that interested police, given there were no signs of forced entry and you denied going anywhere. When they wanted to search your home again, you made them get a warrant. Didn't find anything. Practically painted the joint with Luminol — no blood. Naturally you posted a reward, flyers, created the "Have you seen Robin?" website. Didn't really help, though. Everyone in the world thinks you did it. *(A long beat as they take this in.)*

AVIS. The world thinks ... we're murderers?

WREN. Aren't you? Lots of theories, of course: Why no blood? My personal favorite is that one or both of you smothered her. Then you got all panicky, the way people do, and you made a plan. One or both of you gathered up your poor, little dead girl, wrapped her in heavy-duty plastic, since it *was* a heavy duty, tossed her in the trunk and drove her up here to this lake. Then — and this was smart, I'll give you this — then and only then did you bash her head in. Did a good job of it. Left forensics with a classic conundrum. Where's the blood? Not in your house. Anyhow, you slipped her in the lake, one or both of you, drove home and called the cops the next morning. Oh, lucky for you — big cold front came through that night. Froze that lake up as solid as ... well, ice. By the time Robin came up a-bob-bob-bobbin', there wasn't much left of Robin.

AVIS. This is a nightmare.

WREN. I gotta say, I don't think I could do that to a child of mine. Smothering maybe. We all get pissed off, or perhaps a little too enthusiastic in our sexual desires. *(Staring directly at Moss by now.)* But. To smash her head into pulp, destroy the face of the child you'd loved. And then to dump her where you knew she'd just

... disintegrate. This person you'd made. I couldn't do that. Still, maybe it was smart. What jury would believe a parent could do that to their own child?

MOSS. If you're looking for some kind of confession —

WREN. (*Laughing out loud.*) Confession!? My God, confession!? Why would I want a confession? I work for your defense. (*Lights fade to black.*)

Scene 3

Late that afternoon. The room has a rich, warm light. Avis sits looking through a photo album. Wren sits next to her. Moss stands scowling by the window.

AVIS. This looks familiar.

WREN. (*Interested, coming to look.*) What?

AVIS. (*Pointing at a photo.*) This.

WREN. (*Picking up a legal pad.*) Your neighbor, you mean?

AVIS. No, behind her — that bush.

WREN. What — the one with the flowers?

AVIS. Yes. That's spirea.

WREN. You remember that?

AVIS. Absolutely.

WREN. What do you remember? The corner of the house it's near?

AVIS. No, no — I don't remember the house at all.

WREN. That's your house.

AVIS. Sorry. The bush, though. We had these when I was little. A whole, long line of them. In the spring they'd go all white with these complex flowers — compound I mean, or something. Like a wonderful bridal veil going all around our yard.

WREN. You had a yard?

AVIS. We must have.

WREN. Where?

AVIS. Who knows? It's a wide, wide world. I like my ring, by the way. Glad you found it. It was so lovely when Moss gave it to me.

WREN. What? You mean when he proposed?

AVIS. Oh, no. Today, I mean. When he put it on my finger. (*Moss*

sighs with disgust, stares outside.)

WREN. So nothing in this album, eh?

AVIS. Sorry. May as well get the next one.

WREN. That's the last of them.

AVIS. Really?

WREN. And all you've recognized, in hundreds of photos, is one bush.

AVIS. I've really been trying —

WREN. Do you have any idea of the problems we're facing trying to defend you? The whole world thinks you're faking this.

AVIS. I'm doing my best —

WREN. I think you're faking.

AVIS. I know; I'm sorry.

WREN. There is no such thing as what you have. We can't go into court and claim total amnesia on both your parts — recurring like clockwork, day after day.

AVIS. But if we really have it —

WREN. What you have is a winnable case! There's no blood in your house. They don't even know if her skull was battered before or after she was dead.

AVIS. But everyone thinks —

WREN. They can't prove it. I've gone over this a hundred times with you.

AVIS. I'm sorry. I keep asking because it seems so unreal.

WREN. What's unreal is this act of yours. This ... incomprehensible ... *routine*. You know, the minute you and Moss get your memories back, we can go in there and beat their brains out. But as long as you don't —

MOSS. What's happening right now? Is the court in some kind of adjournment, or — ?

WREN. It's still pre-trial. You're seeing psychiatrists.

MOSS. We are? How often?

WREN. Three days a week. You don't remember?

MOSS. Are we going today?

WREN. It's the weekend.

MOSS. Oh.

AVIS. So you're the one who ... what? ... babysits us, while — ?

WREN. We take turns, actually. Most of the team. I'm your favorite.

AVIS. You are? Sorry, I didn't mean —

WREN. That's all right; I'm uninsultable by now. After working

with the two of you, I'm impervious. (*Picks up the album.*) You know, for awhile we had these pictures tacked up on the walls. Papered the place — looked like a Photo-Mat in here. To you they were just billboards in a foreign language.

AVIS. They're very nice pictures. Someone's a good photographer.

WREN. You. You're a good photographer. It's your hobby.

AVIS. Really? (*Looking at the photo.*) We must have had a very nice life.

MOSS. Why aren't there any pictures of Robin?

WREN. I told you; you got rid of those.

MOSS. *Hundreds* of photos of our only daughter? We threw those away?

WREN. People do strange things in times of grieving. Assuming you were grieving.

AVIS. Of course we were.

MOSS. Not one image of Robin is in this house.

WREN. And your point?

MOSS. Where's the proof? You haven't shown us a single picture of us with this young girl. You haven't demonstrated that we even met her.

AVIS. But why would she lie?

MOSS. The question is, why would we believe her.

WREN. (*Sighing, rising with the album.*) I'm putting this away. Anybody want tea?

MOSS. What do you put in it? (*Wren shakes her head and exits.*) Come on.

AVIS. What do you mean?

MOSS. I think I can hotwire her SUV. Come on.

AVIS. Are you crazy?

MOSS. We can't stay here. We have no idea if what she's telling us is true.

AVIS. We can't steal her car.

MOSS. Yes, we can. I think I know how to do it.

AVIS. Where would we go?

MOSS. Anywhere. Some town where we can find some human who doesn't know us from Adam and Eve, who'll tell us what the hell is going on.

AVIS. We *have* a human —

MOSS. Who's obviously lying.

AVIS. Why? What possible reason would she have to make this up?

MOSS. How do we know there even was a murder? And if there

was, how do we know that little girl was the victim? Or was our daughter? Maybe we're being set up here. Maybe she's some famous person's daughter. Maybe this is some huge sort of case. For all we know, she could be the president's daughter.

AVIS. You think we murdered the president's daughter?

MOSS. We didn't murder anybody!

AVIS. I'm not going.

WREN. (*Returning.*) Going? Going where?

MOSS. Nowhere. Just a walk around the house.

AVIS. He was going to hotwire your car.

MOSS. I don't believe you!

AVIS. I'm just telling the truth.

MOSS. You would make a terrible prisoner of war!

WREN. You can hotwire a car? You remember that much, eh? (*Flipping Moss the keys.*) Don't bother. Take these. Driveway's about a mile long. Careful on the switchbacks. Halfway down you'll see some security personnel. They'll bring you back up. Don't worry. They're always complete gentlemen.

MOSS. We've done this before? (*Wren nods. Moss gives a dispirited sigh.*)

WREN. So. Who wants to see a tape of Robin's school play?

AVIS. No. Oh ... God, no.

MOSS. Wait — are we in it with her?

WREN. Sorry. It's just the performance. And it's hard to see her face — she's in a squirrel suit.

MOSS. Then no. No, thank you.

WREN. OK ... How about some morgue shots?

MOSS. Morgue shots!? Jesus Christ — !

WREN. Sorry, but they want me to keep recontextualizing you —

MOSS. We don't want to be recontextualized, OK?! I don't care who you think you are, but you're tormenting us right now, and whatever we may have done, you have no right to do that.

AVIS. Moss —

MOSS. I don't believe we have a daughter. Or if we do, she's much more likely to be Wren here than this snapshot of some pre-teen.

WREN. Moss —

MOSS. (*To Wren.*) You're our daughter. I don't know why you're lying about it, but you are. You're the natural age to be our daughter, you look like us, you sound like us —

WREN. For the thousandth time, I'm not your —

MOSS. You *are!!!* You're our daughter, and you're lying to us!

Why?! Why are you *doing* this?!

AVIS. He's just angry —

MOSS. Will you *shut up*?! (*To Wren.*) Give me a straight answer, right now, or I will take these keys and take that SUV and drive it off a fucking cliff for all I care, but I won't stay here. Why are you telling us lies?!

WREN. Because sometimes you just *PISS — ME — OFF!!!* (*A beat.*) OK? OK? (*As they stare at her, open-mouthed.*) Do you know what it's like, taking care of you every day? Oh, there's a nurse, a male nurse, named Ernie. He helps some days. But mostly it's just you and me. And every morning it is the *exact same thing*. "Hello ... who are you? Who am I? Who are *you*?" And I tell you, and you're grateful — and you forget again the next day and get all scared again, so I tell you again. And again. And again. Every day. And sometimes I lie — yes, I lie. I make up a whole, huge story about a daughter named Robin, 'cause that's what I always wished you'd named me instead of Wren. I work out scenario after scenario, tell you you're physicists or chess champions or revolutionaries or —

MOSS. You're lying.

WREN. No. No, *now* I'm telling the truth. And you know what? If you were in my place, facing this situation day after day, you'd do the same damn thing.

AVIS. How did we get this way?

WREN. It doesn't matter. Which is to say, I don't care. Not anymore. Not after the years I've put in.

MOSS. Years? How many years?

WREN. That too doesn't matter.

AVIS. You have to tell us how this happened. If you know, you —

WREN. *I don't remember, OK?* Today I choose not to remember. Today, I seek the relief of oblivion. Why should you get all the fun? You are the way you are. The only important thing for you to keep in mind — and I use that phrase laughingly — is that nobody could care for you as long as I have and not torture you a little.

AVIS. So none of it? With Robin — ?

WREN. Is real? No, none. The picture's from a frame I bought in the drugstore. There's a whole row of her.

AVIS. Why? Why did you tell us such a horrible thing?

WREN. Isn't it obvious? We're trying to find something that works — that jars you, frightens you. That terrifies you so much that something inside will finally break! Believe me, we've tried all the nice ways.

MOSS. We?

WREN. Ernie and me. And other nurses, the doctors. But I'm the one who's always here. Good old Wren.

MOSS. Our daughter?

WREN. In the flesh.

MOSS. You try a lot of these ... these stories?

WREN. When I have the time and energy, yes.

MOSS. And they never work?

WREN. Not so far.

MOSS. Then why do you keep doing it?

WREN. Among other reasons, if you're not stimulated you tend to become apathetic. This way at least, you stay alive and alert. To a point. And of course it gives me something to live for as well.

MOSS. Which is?

WREN. The opportunity to see fear in your faces. Like right now. "Who is this daughter?" you're thinking. You look at me and ask, "How did we ever — how *could* we ever...?" Well, you could have a daughter like me. And you did. And of course it's scary, but that's life. Time to grow up, kids. It's the best any of us can do under the circumstances.

AVIS. (*After a silence.*) I don't understand. You mean, this is ... our life?

WREN. Like I say, it's sort of a grab bag, depending on my mood. Sometimes I actually like you. I get all bright and sunny, and we spend the whole day pretending to be the most normal family in the world. Other times ... like today ... you don't want to be here. I don't want to be here. But here we are.

MOSS. This is unbearable. This doesn't make any more sense than the other story.

WREN. Given your condition, what story would make sense?

AVIS. You could be lying right now, couldn't you?

WREN. No matter what I tell you, I could be lying. It's not like anything ever strikes a chord. Nothing flips your "on" switch. So I'm left with the occasional shock treatment, which, let's face it, is more for me than you.

MOSS. I think you'd better go.

WREN. Really? You want me to?

MOSS. We've got a lot to think about.

WREN. (*Starting to collect her things.*) Happy to oblige. I can always use the time off. Though I should say, when the two of you start thinking together, it generally doesn't get any better.

MOSS. We'll take our chances.

WREN. Fair enough. Avis, is that how you feel?

AVIS. What choice have we got?

WREN. A very clear choice.

AVIS. What do you mean?

WREN. I mean, you can always reject what I'm saying now and go back to square one. Choose to believe I'm who I said I was: your lawyer.

MOSS. Our lawyer? Oh, wonderful. Which makes us murderers.

WREN. Alleged murderers. And would that be so much worse? After all, I could have been taking a different tack with you just now — trying to break you down with a little disorientation. Everything I've just said could be a classic lawyer's trick.

MOSS. We are not murderers, and you are not our lawyer.

WREN. Too bad. It's a lot more definite. Everyone knows what role to play. Given how the day's going, is it really that much better for you to have a living daughter than a dead one?

AVIS. This is what you call a choice?

WREN. Today's menu isn't too appetizing, but it's all we've got. So, it's up to you: Do I go or stay?

MOSS. Why won't you tell us why we're like this?

AVIS. Maybe she doesn't know. I mean, if she is our lawyer —

MOSS. Don't be absurd!

AVIS. I'm not! (*To Wren.*) If you're our lawyer, then you don't know, do you?

WREN. Hell, as your lawyer, I think you're faking.

AVIS. But if you're our daughter, you'd rather torture us than tell us?

WREN. Pretty much. Today. So, what's it going to be? Morgue shots? Or me?

AVIS. Let me look at the pictures.

MOSS. Avis — !

AVIS. It's my choice! You do what you want.

WREN. (*Opening the morgue shot envelope.*) Good decision. Believe me, you always do better when you think there's an identity just around the corner. Moss? Care to join us? (*As he stares at the two of them.*) Great way to wile away the hours. Come on, it'll feel real in no time. (*As Moss shakes his head no.*) Your loss. Avis, I have to tell you that these are not easy photos to look at.

AVIS. I understand. Go ahead. (*Disgusted, Moss sighs and starts out with the keys. Wren pulls out an eight-by-ten morgue shot. Avis gasps, horrified, freezing Moss.*)

WREN. Yes. Not much left to recognize, even if you could. Nearly all the damage happened after she died, of course. (*Pulling out another, as Avis gasps again.*) I'd like to say it gets easier; it doesn't, really.

AVIS. Oh, God! Who could do that...? Who could do that to their own child?

WREN. Not you. That's what we're trying to establish here. (*As Moss looks over their shoulders at the photos, his shock registering.*) Any of this look familiar?

MOSS. How could it?

WREN. I think we're always stunned by the capacity for human cruelty, whoever's responsible. Here, I'll take those. (*Moss, barely noticing he's doing it, lets the keys fall softly out of his hand into Wren's.*) There's plenty of room. Sit. (*Wren pats the couch. Moss sits next to them, unable to take his eyes off the photos.*) You know the longer I do this, the more I realize that the only way to deal with reality is to face it straight on. (*Avis breaks into tears. She sobs heavily as Wren stares at her but does not comfort her. Moss stares steadily at the photos on the table as lights fade slowly to black.*)

Scene 4

Morning. The same room. A sunny day. Moss, in his robe, reads a National Geographic. Avis, already dressed and wearing her wedding ring, works a crossword in a puzzle book. Tea and bagels are on the table, just as they were in Scene 2, but they've largely been consumed.

AVIS. Three letters? Sea bird?

MOSS. Ern. It's always ern.

AVIS. It could be auk.

MOSS. Sea bird, three letters? It's always ern. "E-r-n." Also sea bird, four letters — with an "e" on the end.

AVIS. I'm not sure ...

MOSS. Believe me, ern — it's the way to go.

AVIS. (*Writing it in.*) Hm. (*After a beat.*) Four letters. Curved molding.

MOSS. You're kidding.
 AVIS. No, what is it?
 MOSS. You don't know?
 AVIS. Do you?
 MOSS. Ogee. It's always ogee. Can't be anything else. You really don't know that?
 AVIS. I was testing you. *(As he gives her a look, then returns to his magazine.)* Good article?
 MOSS. *(Nodding, getting lost in the article again.)* Mm-hm. About greenstone.
 AVIS. Greenstone?
 MOSS. Some kind of ... oldest ... rock in the world or something. Laurentian shield ... tundra ... that sort of stuff. Little white foxes, little brown lemmings. Tons of ... lichen.
 AVIS. Is it pretty colors?
 MOSS. The lichen? Yeah. Wide variety. Bright as hell.
 AVIS. I wonder why? Wouldn't it be easier for some creature to find it? Eat it?
 MOSS. What eats lichen?
 AVIS. I don't know. Musk ox?
 MOSS. Musk ox? Doesn't say anything about that in here. Think you're guessing on that one.
 AVIS. It's not a guess.
 MOSS. Of course it is.
 AVIS. I'm not guessing. I'm deducing.
 MOSS. Deducing?
 AVIS. Yes. I mean, what else is a musk ox going to eat? Baby seals? It's a plant-eater. What plants are there? A little grass under the snow maybe, a little moss and lichen. It's logical.
 MOSS. A logical guess.
 AVIS. Fine, have it your way. We will go to the sub-Arctic at lunch time, we will watch the musk ox. We will see what he eats.
 MOSS. What if he's on a diet?
 AVIS. Then we'll watch the next one. They can't all be dieting.
 MOSS. You're an optimist. I don't think you have a proper appreciation of how brutally disappointing a place like the sub-Arctic can be. Even at lunch.
 AVIS. Well, I'm sure you can teach me.
 WREN. *(Off.)* I'm back! *(Wren enters from outside. She's in running gear similar to earlier scenes.)* Hi.
 AVIS. Hi, honey.

MOSS. How was your run?
 WREN. I'm a total traitor. It was so beautiful out there I just gave up and took a long walk. Went all the way down and back up again. How're you guys?
 AVIS. Us? Oh, couldn't be better. *(To Moss.)* South African zebra. Extinct. Six letters.
 MOSS. Quagga.
 AVIS. *(As she writes it in.)* Isn't he good? What a memory.
 WREN. You're an ace, Pop. *(Of the tea things.)* Don't we clean up around here?
 AVIS. Oh — we got preoccupied ...
 WREN. It's OK, I'll do it. *(Wren gives Avis a quick kiss on the cheek and takes the tea things into the kitchen. Avis seems surprised at having been kissed and holds her hand to the spot thoughtfully. Moss is lost in his article.)* You guys want to hit the village? We can catch a movie or something.
 MOSS. Maybe later. We're not moving too fast this morning.
 AVIS. You should get dressed.
 MOSS. In a minute. Almost finished with this.
 AVIS. Wren? See if there's a good movie. Otherwise we can always just shop.
 WREN. *(Off.)* Great!
 MOSS. You wouldn't rather stay here?
 AVIS. It's so beautiful out. Don't you want to promenade on Main Street?
 MOSS. Right. My life's dream.
 AVIS. What do you want to do?
 MOSS. Seriously?
 AVIS. Of course, seriously.
 MOSS. I think Wren should go to town without us. And I don't think I should get dressed. I think you and I should both get undressed.
 AVIS. Moss...!
 WREN. *(Suddenly sticking her head in the room.)* This'll be fun, won't it? *(Going back into the kitchen.)* We'll poke around in all the stores, see people we know — a real family outing.
 AVIS. What are you talking about?
 MOSS. What do you think I'm talking about? Remember last night?
 AVIS. Last night?
 WREN. *(Off.)* Let's go to Melanie's Kitchen for lunch. I like their

salads.

MOSS. You know.

AVIS. No, I don't know. What are you talking about?

WREN. (*Off.*) Or we could do Giamatti's for seafood. They have good shrimp.

MOSS. I'm talking about what we did last night. Lying in bed naked, whispering together? Remember? It was so nice we didn't want to stop?

AVIS. I have no memory of —

MOSS. Remember what you asked me to do?

AVIS. I didn't ask you to do any — !

MOSS. You certainly did.

WREN. (*Off.*) Where do you guys want to go for lunch?

MOSS. And I said, "All right, but tomorrow we're going to do this in the light —"

AVIS. *What are you talking about!?*

WREN. (*Off.*) You guys? (*Entering.*) Is anybody listening to me? (*After a beat, as Moss and Avis stare at each other.*) So ... um, Dad? Are you ever going to get dressed?

MOSS. I'm not sure we feel like the village today, honey.

AVIS. I do.

MOSS. Why don't you go without us? I think we'd rather just lie around.

AVIS. Speak for yourself. I'm going with Wren.

WREN. I don't understand. Why don't you want to go?

MOSS. Oh, so much to do up here. (*Of his magazine.*) This *Geographic's* full of articles I haven't even ... See? "Cuzco — City Time Forgot." Avis hasn't finished her crossword. It's a real bear today, isn't it, sweetheart?

AVIS. (*Increasingly stressed, to Wren.*) I'm going with you.

WREN. OK.

AVIS. I mean it. I'm going with you.

WREN. Fine. Are you upset?

AVIS. Of course not. I'm just ...

WREN. Do you want to stay? You can do what you want. I'm not trying to kidnap anybody. I just thought we could all ... OK, what's going on? (*No response.*) Come on — something's up. Something's not working.

AVIS. Moss. It's Moss who's not working.

MOSS. I'm working fine! I'm sitting here with my *Geographic*, reading articles, minding my own business —

AVIS. He had sex with me! He said he had sex with me.

WREN. When?

AVIS. Just now.

WREN. He had sex with you while I was in the — ?

AVIS. Last night! Just now he said that last night —

MOSS. I never said anything of the sort.

AVIS. You said I asked you to do something.

WREN. Avis —

AVIS. And that you wanted to do it again today — in the light! You said we should get undressed!

MOSS. We get undressed every night.

AVIS. How do you know that?! How do you *know*?

MOSS. It's how we woke up. (*After a silence.*) I felt good this morning. When I woke up. I felt satisfied. So I extrapolated, I *deduced* that this satisfaction, this ... inner joy I felt derived from a much greater joy — a shared joy — which must have occurred sometime in the night.

WREN. (*Cautiously.*) Avis? Does that make sense to you?

AVIS. (*To Moss.*) How can you say I asked you to do something? You can't. You can't say that!

MOSS. I was pretending.

AVIS. You — ?! You were — !?

MOSS. Pretending. I'm pretending now. What's wrong with pretending? That's what we're supposed to be doing today. That's what all this is, right? Pretending?

AVIS. Not pretending we had sex!

MOSS. Why not? What's wrong with that?

AVIS. I don't even know you! I can't do this.

WREN. Avis —

AVIS. No. I can't work this way. He's not operating in good faith. I have no idea what's going on in his mind —

WREN. He's just your husband; you're a couple. You're sitting here, in your house. Things come up, you discuss them —

MOSS. That's what I'm saying —

AVIS. Not these things. Not this kind of ... ambush. We haven't laid any ground rules for this. We haven't discussed this at all. It's an entirely different area.

MOSS. Why?

AVIS. *Why* — !?

WREN. Avis, do you believe that I'm your daughter?

AVIS. You tell me you are.

WREN. Do you believe Moss is your husband?
AVIS. I don't know. He seems like it, but ...
WREN. What do you believe? (*After a beat.*) Do you think you had sex with him, and got pregnant and had me?
AVIS. If you say so.
MOSS. There's a vote of confidence.
AVIS. I do not appreciate sarcasm. (*To Wren.*) You tell me all these things, but I don't feel it. It's just words. You say we're a couple — a family. But I don't *feel* that we are. We're just ... pretending.
WREN. But when you're pretending, when you sit here together pretending to be a happy couple with a loving daughter in a beautiful home, doesn't it feel better at least? A little bit better?
AVIS. Yes, I suppose.
MOSS. Until I mention sex.
AVIS. Until you mention sex, yes.
WREN. That was too intimate for you, right? Too challenging?
AVIS. Absolutely.
WREN. Fine. Well. I think we know what to do then. (*Moving to Moss.*) Don't mention sex.
MOSS. OK.
WREN. (*To Avis.*) Fair enough?
AVIS. Yes. Thank you. That should be a real improvement.
WREN. Great. Should we get back to normal then?
AVIS. I'm not trying to be unreasonable.
MOSS. I know that.
AVIS. This is all so hard.
MOSS. It's hard for me, too. I just thought intimacy — you know, if we tried a little intimacy —
AVIS. I have to work up to that.
MOSS. I understand. Maybe later on.
AVIS. Maybe.
MOSS. Tonight or something.
AVIS. Maybe.
WREN. Meanwhile, we have the whole rest of the day to ... feel normal, OK? We can go to the village; we don't *have* to go to the village. We can just sit here and be who we are. We can be happy. That's the choice every day, right? Be happy or be sad. It's up to us. We have the power. The power to choose. Come on, now; we've been doing great so far.
AVIS. Why are we like this? I don't want to be like this.
WREN. We all have things we'd rather not be. No point dwelling

on it. We simply adjust, that's all.
AVIS. That's not an answer! What happened to us?
WREN. It just upsets you when I tell you. Why go into it?
AVIS. I want to know. Why don't you feel like my daughter?
WREN. Is it so important, really? I act like her. I'm here. I say all the right things. What more do we need? (*A horn honks. They start.*)
AVIS. What's that?
WREN. Oh, that's Ernie — I forgot. He wanted to come with us.
MOSS. Who's Ernie?
WREN. He's that male nurse. Remember, I told you this morning?
AVIS. I'm not going to town with someone named Ernie.
WREN. Why not? You love Ernie. (*To Avis.*) He talks to you about spirea. It's your favorite flower.
AVIS. (*As Wren goes to the window and waves.*) It is?
MOSS. This clinches it; I'm not going.
AVIS. You didn't tell us about this.
WREN. I know. I'm sorry. It really just slipped my mind. Believe me, you see Ernie all the time.
AVIS. I don't know that!
WREN. Avis, you need to trust me.
AVIS. I'm trying, but —
WREN. I want you to look in my eyes. Listen to the tone of my voice. See me. I'm relaxed. I'm your daughter. I'm here to help you. Come with me and say hi to Ernie. Moss, sure you don't want to come?
MOSS. Positive.
WREN. You'll get bored all alone.
MOSS. I have my magazine.
WREN. Suit yourself. You always do. Avis?
AVIS. Who is *Ernie*? Where are you taking me? What if there isn't any village? What if Moss is gone when I get —
WREN. Oh, for — ! There *is* a village. Moss *will* be here. OK? You can have a quiet evening together when you get back. I'll be happy to leave you alone. Do whatever you like: stare at the lake, have a glass of wine —
AVIS. (*Suddenly going to Moss.*) I'm afraid.
WREN. Oh, God — !
AVIS. Moss — !
MOSS. What? Why are you afraid?
AVIS. I feel so alone! I'm afraid to stay awake, I'm afraid to sleep — when I close my eyes, I see pictures. Not dreams — pictures of

real things, against the darkness.

WREN. Avis.

AVIS. Flashes. Almost people. Almost ... things.

WREN. Please?

AVIS. Against the darkness. *(The car honks again.)*

WREN. Gotta go. The village waits for no one. Come on, you'll love it down there.

AVIS. *(To Moss.)* You come too.

MOSS. I don't like the village.

AVIS. Of course you do, you love it. Wren said so.

MOSS. She said you love it.

AVIS. She meant both of us. Please.

WREN. Time to go.

AVIS. Why don't you want to be with me?

MOSS. I will be, tonight. When you get back. *(Indicating his magazine.)* I'll tell you all about "The Laughing Dogs of the Kalahari."

AVIS. As we look at the water?

MOSS. As we look far across the water.

AVIS. Over wine?

MOSS. Absolutely. *(Avis stares at him a long moment, then turns to Wren.)*

AVIS. All right.

WREN. All right? Great. See you later on, Pop.

MOSS. Have a great time. *(Avis and Wren head for the door.)*

AVIS. *(To Moss.)* If I don't know you ... when I get back ...

MOSS. You will. 'Course you will. *(Avis hesitates. Then she and Wren exit. A long moment passes, in which Moss studies the magazine. A car door slams outside. Moss suddenly rises and stares at the door.)* Don't go. *(As another car door slams.)* I don't want to be alone. *(Sound of the car engine starting. He suddenly runs to the door and shouts outside.)* Don't go! I don't feel good about this! I don't feel — ! Don't go — !!! *(The car pulls away. All's quiet. Moss returns.)* She'll be back. No problem. She'll be right back. *(Sitting.)* My name is Moss, and when she gets back I'll be sitting here. *(Rubbing the arm of his chair.)* This is my chair. *(After a beat.)* I'm Moss. *(Lights fade to black.)*

Scene 5

Morning. Moss sits with Wren. Outside a quiet, constant drizzle. Moss is casually dressed. Wren's in running clothes, as usual. Moss's wallet is on the table, but nothing else.

MOSS. Why's she taking so long?

WREN. She's gone. Ernie took her.

MOSS. I thought she went to get dressed.

WREN. She did. She got dressed, and Ernie took her away. That's what he does. He drives her.

MOSS. Where does he take her?

WREN. The Wound Healing Institute.

MOSS. The ... Wound...?

WREN. She has a wound. She gets treatment there every morning.

MOSS. And you say she's my...?

WREN. Your wife. Avis. You've been married a long time. You really didn't find anything familiar about waking up with her?

MOSS. I was shocked. I'm not used to waking up with strangers.

WREN. What are you used to? *(A silence. He rises, goes to the window.)*

MOSS. This is a beautiful room.

WREN. Yes, it is.

MOSS. Bet there's a great view — when it isn't raining, I mean. Whose house is it?

WREN. Mine.

MOSS. Really? Do you rent or own?

WREN. Actually, I sort of inherited it.

MOSS. From who?

WREN. From you.

MOSS. And you say my name is...?

WREN. Your name is Moss. It's there in your wallet. You looked, didn't you?

MOSS. Moss. Why can't I remember anything?

WREN. What do you want to remember?

MOSS. What happened to me? I'd like to remember that.

WREN. We could talk about that. Do you have enough tea?

MOSS. I'm fine.
 WREN. I could fix you another bagel —
 MOSS. If you could just — Just tell me who I am.
 WREN. You're Moss; you're a judge. Long ago you married Avis.
 MOSS. She has a wound?
 WREN. The two of you had a daughter. Naturally, you loved her very much. She was your only child.
 MOSS. And that's you? What's your name?
 WREN. Wren.
 MOSS. Wren? You mean like...?
 WREN. Little brown bird? Perches? Kinda wary?
 MOSS. So I should know you.
 WREN. You should know a lot of things. You do know them actually, for a while. Then you don't.
 MOSS. Why?
 WREN. You were injured. You had an injury.
 MOSS. When?
 WREN. Long ago. Years.
 MOSS. Years? What happened?
 WREN. Car accident. Pretty rough one. You and Avis ... went off a cliff one morning, close to here. Right into the lake.
 MOSS. God.
 WREN. God was not on duty that day.
 MOSS. Who was driving?
 WREN. Mom. Avis. She was sober. Weather was fine. No other cars. No sign of sudden braking. She was driving down the hill, but instead of curving the way the road curved, she ... went straight. Rolled over twice, hit a bunch of rocks and trees and landed in the shallow water. Police couldn't understand how she lost control — until we found her note. It was back up here, on my bed. She put it there before the two of you left. It explained everything, including why she tried to kill both of you.
 MOSS. She what?
 WREN. It was an attempted murder-suicide. She was very clear about that — in the note, I mean.
 MOSS. Why would she — ? I don't believe this.
 WREN. You never do.
 MOSS. She wrote a note? Where is it? I want to see it.
 WREN. It was years ago.
 MOSS. I don't care. You can't make claims like this without evidence. You can't — *(She takes an old, worn note from a drawer in a*

small table. He falls silent.)

WREN. Want to read it?

MOSS. You read it.

WREN. Stop me if you remember anything, OK? *(Reading.)* "My dearest Wren. My little bird. I can't pretend to be happy anymore, not even for your sake. It has to end today. Believe me, this has nothing to do with you. You're just starting out. Soon you'll get married, start your own family and experience life's ... daily terrors."

MOSS. She sounds so cynical.

WREN. It's a suicide note. *(Reading.)* "It's so lovely here in the garden. The flagstones are nestled together in their strangely consoling asymmetry. Nothing consoles me, though. Not anymore."

MOSS. I don't understand this.

WREN. "The truth is, I spied on your father. Our life felt so ideal ... I couldn't help myself — I looked through his things. There were no surprises, no strange computer files or phone numbers. Just the man I'd always known. Then, in the bottom of an old file cabinet, I found a notebook — a journal — about me."

MOSS. Let me see that. *(Taking the note, reading aloud.)* "Page after page of notes about things I'd said, or looks I'd given him, or tunes I'd hummed, or how I brushed my teeth or redid a room or cooked carrots or — it was endless. A parade of petty criticisms of everything I did, or said or was. The title of the journal was 'Not Worth Mentioning.' And it was full. The last line said, 'Time to burn this one.'"

WREN. Read the rest.

MOSS. No, it's ... private.

WREN. It's not like you're keeping a secret, Dad. I know it by heart.

MOSS. "He'd been doing this for years. All the pride I took in myself, in *us* — the joy I thought we had — was an illusion. Moss has been faithful, but to what? To him, I'm an ignorant mountain of irredeemable failings — and I'm so trivial, I'm not even worthy of a complaint."

WREN. *(As he stops reading, reciting the rest from memory.)* "Are we alive? Have we been? Moss lets me settle for an illusion. He tells me he's content. How awful to think he might be." *(After a beat.)* "Moss is coming down the path now. He thinks we're going shopping in town. But I've decided. Today's the day."

MOSS. What's her wound? You said she has a wound.

WREN. *(Taking the note from him, folding it, putting it in her pocket.)* This. This was her wound.

MOSS. Was?

WREN. She's over it now.

MOSS. What do you mean? Is she...? What happened?

WREN. (*Collecting the tea things.*) Some days you don't even ask a question. Some instinct tells you not to ask. You smile, stare out the window. Those are such good days.

MOSS. When's Avis coming back?

WREN. She's never coming back.

MOSS. What do you mean? She was just here!

WREN. Try not to get excited. This is a very common experience.

MOSS. Oh, I doubt *that*.

WREN. The main thing is I'm here, and —

MOSS. She's not dead.

WREN. I love you.

MOSS. She's not!

WREN. (*After a beat.*) Of course not. How could she be? You see her every day.

MOSS. That's right. I do. (*As Wren takes the tea things to the kitchen.*) Don't I? Don't I? (*Outside, the rain's begun to let up. He stares out the window. Wren returns.*) When will I get better?

WREN. I think if you were going to get better, it would have happened by now.

MOSS. I can't live like this.

WREN. You do. Really. We manage. When the weather's beautiful, this is such a nice place.

MOSS. Where's the garden? Where you said she wrote the ... I want to see it.

WREN. (*Pointing off.*) The garden? Just down the hill — that little path.

MOSS. I want to go there. Now.

WREN. That's fine. Rain's letting up. Might still be slippery.

MOSS. I don't care. I'm ... I'm going there. We can talk about all this later. When I feel more ... rested.

WREN. All right. (*Moss starts out through the kitchen door. He suddenly stops.*)

MOSS. What if I don't — ? If I don't...?

WREN. Know me when you come back? We'll have our little talk again.

MOSS. Are you...?

WREN. What?

MOSS. Are you married?

WREN. No, Dad. I'm not married.

MOSS. Why not?

WREN. Read the note. (*He nods uncertainly, then leaves. She looks out the window after him. Outside it grows brighter. After a long moment, Avis comes in the front door. She's in a coat and hat, wet from the rain.*)

AVIS. It's brightening up! Right when I get done with my walk. Wouldn't you know it?

WREN. Maybe you'll get luckier tomorrow.

AVIS. You're sure I always take a walk this time of day?

WREN. Absolutely. No matter what the weather's like.

AVIS. And I enjoy it?

WREN. Here, let me hang those up for you. (*Wren takes Avis's hat and coat into the hall leading to the kitchen.*)

AVIS. (*Shaking her head.*) Guess it takes all kinds. Where's, um...? Where's the man I woke up with? Um...?

WREN. (*Returning.*) Moss?

AVIS. Yes. Is that his name? Moss? Where is he?

WREN. He's not here.

AVIS. Where'd he go?

WREN. Maybe you should sit down.

AVIS. Sit down? Why?

WREN. This part's always hard. I generally save it for after your walk.

AVIS. What are you talking about?

WREN. Moss — the man you woke up with?

AVIS. Yes?

WREN. He had an accident — a very serious one.

AVIS. When?

WREN. Years ago.

AVIS. Years? I don't understand. He seemed fine this morning.

WREN. He wasn't here this morning. (*A beat.*) He's gone. He's been gone for a long time.

AVIS. He was just here.

WREN. No.

AVIS. We woke up together —

WREN. No. You didn't. You thought you saw him, but you didn't.

AVIS. What are you saying?

WREN. He's dead. Moss is dead. He was killed in an accident, years ago. Moss is never coming back.

AVIS. But I saw him. (*Striding toward the kitchen, calling.*) Moss? Moss — ! (*Returning, looking out the windows.*) Where's he gone?

Where is he? *(No response.)* Why didn't you tell me this?
 WREN. I tell you every day.
 AVIS. And who are you, that I'm supposed to believe you?!
 WREN. I'm Wren, your daughter. We live here, the two of us.
 AVIS. So you say! Are you real?
 WREN. Yes.
 AVIS. And how would I know that?
 WREN. You take it on faith.
 AVIS. I most certainly do *not* take it on faith. I woke up with someone this morning. I saw him. I touched him. He's real.
 WREN. No.
 AVIS. Will you stop saying that!?
 WREN. No.
 AVIS. What are you telling me? That Moss died, and out of some bottomless despair, I went crazy, and now I — what? Hallucinate him every morning?
 WREN. Yes.
 AVIS. I loved him that much?
 WREN. You loved each other.
 AVIS. That's not love; that's sick. I would have to be sick.
 WREN. Aren't you?
 AVIS. No! I feel fine, I —
 WREN. Who are you?
 AVIS. Of course there's that. I don't know who I am. But ... *(A beat.)*
 WREN. Yes?
 AVIS. But I don't ... That doesn't mean I ... I certainly ... *(A beat.)*
 WREN. Yes? *(Avis moves away slowly, sits and looks all around. Silence.)*
 AVIS. It's so quiet here. After the rain.
 WREN. Yes.
 AVIS. Do we always do this?
 WREN. Not every day. Most days. *(Avis moves away slowly, sits and looks all around. Silence.)* Are you all right? *(No response.)* It's hard to take in, I know. If you just sit and rest, usually that helps. *(No response.)* Anyway, I have to go down to the village right now. Sorry, but we're out of practically everything. I won't be long. We can talk about all this when I get back, OK? I mean, if you still want to.
 AVIS. You mean if I still remember.
 WREN. Sometimes you do, for awhile.
 AVIS. He was so ...
 WREN. What?
 AVIS. So real for me. *(Looking up at Wren.)* Go ahead if you need

to. I'll be all right.
 WREN. I'll be back soon. Read a magazine or putter around in the garden, if you like. We can play Scrabble when I get back.
 AVIS. Do we like that?
 WREN. Look how nice it's getting! I won't even need a jacket. *(As Wren starts for the front door, Moss calls from the kitchen.)*
 MOSS. *(Off.)* Wren? Do we have any garden tools? I was just thinking — *(Entering, seeing them.)* What's going on? *(Surprised, Avis rises. Moss stares at her.)*
 WREN. I'm going shopping. What do you want for dinner? *(They look at her — then at each other again.)* No suggestions? OK, we'll make it a surprise. *(Starting out.)* Love you.
 MOSS. Wait — !
 WREN. Sorry — gotta run! *(She's out the door. Moss and Avis stare at each other again. A car door shuts; sound of an engine. The car pulls away. Silence.)*
 AVIS. You've been gone.
 MOSS. You too.
 AVIS. What a day it's been.
 MOSS. Yes.
 AVIS. And it's not even noon. *(Looking at him more closely.)* Moss, right?
 MOSS. Yes. Where have — ?
 AVIS. You're very handsome in this light.
 MOSS. Avis —
 AVIS. Yes?
 MOSS. Where have you — ? I mean ... *(Very cautiously, he reaches out, touching her shoulder.)*
 AVIS. Yes? *(He drops his arm again, stares at her.)* You know it's funny — this morning when I was getting dressed, I thought just for a second that I might be up here trying to get you to marry me. After all, you do seem like quite a catch. But then I found out we *were* married. And we have all this. For a moment, anyway. For a day.
 MOSS. Where were you?
 AVIS. And we have a lovely daughter too, who does so many things for us ... apparently. It would be hard to ask for more, wouldn't it? In a way.
 MOSS. Where were you?
 AVIS. And you know what else I was thinking? I was thinking that maybe this is what happiness looks like. If we could see it, I mean. Does that make sense? Perhaps we're simply caught in ... a state of

happiness. And there's no need to get out. *(She looks out the window. Moss covers his face with one hand and weeps silently. Attempting to distract him.)* Wish I knew what *that* was.

MOSS. What?

AVIS. The water down there. It goes all around. You can see it in three different directions.

MOSS. Four, actually.

AVIS. You think it's all the same? The same body of water, I mean?

MOSS. I don't know. It could be. *(Staring for a long moment at the water.)* Isn't it? *(Fade to black.)*

End of Play

PROPERTY LIST

Coffee

Tongs

Tray with bagels, cream cheese, jam, butter, knives

Tea tray

Wallet and purse

Legal pad, folder with photos

Diamond ring

Photo album

Keys

Envelope with photos

National Geographic

Crossword puzzle book, pen

Wallet

Note